

How Many?

When you think about how many will be saved, what comes to mind? If like me almost immediately think of

Matthew 7:13-14 *"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."*

It says "few" so we often consider that as our answer.

We look at our number in the assembly & think "Well, this is probably about right. Jesus said "few would find the way" & we only have a few here compared to what is around us. We turn to

Matthew 19:23-25 *And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."*

When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

1Peter 4:18 *And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"*

They reinforce the idea that only a very select few will make it to heaven.

Sometimes this even causes us to question our own salvation!

"If only a few are going to make it, how can I do it?"

"It is so hard, I just don't think I will make it all the way."

Is this the attitude God wants to see in His Children?

Have we stressed these verses so much that we expect people to refuse the Gospel or fail in keeping God's will? Has our focus on these passages led us to think that because only a few will make it, no matter how hard one tries they will probably fail?

That sounds like a recipe for disaster!

Is that what Jesus wanted us to get from Matthew 7?

Consider the context: Jesus is teaching against the Pharisees.

Matthew 5:21,27,31,33,38,43 *"You have heard that it was said"*

Jesus is teaching against the Pharisee's form of self-righteousness

Matthew 5:20 *For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

In chap. 6 he teaches against their hypocrisy in good deeds (6:1-4), prayer (6:5-15), and fasting (6:16-18).

Looking at Jesus' statement in **Mt 7:13-14** through the lens of "He's teaching against the Pharisees," one begins to see that only a few of those who trust in themselves will get off the broad way by finding the narrow way that leads to life.

These verses warn us of the danger of focus on our own righteousness. Don't over emphasize the few will be saved. That will hurt our evangelism & our own security of salvation.

Instead consider...

Matthew 8:10-12 *When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

The context is the healing of the centurion's servant (**Mt 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10**).

Jesus told the centurion he would "come & heal him", but the centurion said no, "but only say the word, and my servant will be healed"

Verses 10-12 is the response Jesus gave to this man's faith. Of course, this is a reference to the salvation of the Gentiles through Jesus, but notice it says "many" not "few."

This idea is presented in several other passages as well.

Romans 5:19 *For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

Here it draws a contrast between the many who are made sinners by Adam's sin and the many that will be made righteous by Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Hebrews 2:10 *For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

Here it references the number of children that God would glorify through the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

Consider Paul as he stood in Corinth, seeing a city full of those he would describe in...

1Corinthians 6:9-11 *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

But that's not what the Lord saw when He looked at Corinth. He could see the hearts of the people.

Acts 18:9-10 *And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people."*

Revelation 7:9 *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,*

Finally, as John is witnessing the great worship scene of heaven in **Revelation 7:9-17** he describes for us a great, enumerable multitude of people worshiping God. Will many be saved? Yes.

We need to set our mind upon the "many who are the Lord's people!"

Such an attitude will help us to...

Be More Than Conquerors –

Romans 8:37 *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

This is why Paul could say,

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Because of this powerful gospel we are more than conquerors and we can remove any spirit of fear and put on a spirit of power, love, self-control

2Timothy 1:7 *for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

But the few will be saved mindset says, "What's the use in trying to reach people anymore?

They won't listen" or "I am ashamed of the gospel... it doesn't save like it use to," or "I'm afraid to share my faith."

This mindset is a defeated mindset.

This is a mindset that rips the power right out of the gospel message.

Will many be saved? Absolutely, many will be saved because we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus.

Hold Fast Our Confession Of Faith –

It will push you to greater diligence, give you hope, help you see that if you will devote your life to learning God's will and doing His will, you can go to heaven.

We are often told to "Hold fast..."? Just a sampling from the Epistles includes

Hebrews 3:6 *but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.*

Hebrews 4:14 *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.*

Hebrews 10:23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.*

2Timothy 1:13 *Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.*

1Thessalonians 5:21 *but test everything; hold fast what is good.*

A many will be saved mindset aids us in holding fast to our faith, it helps us see heaven ahead for ourself.

But a few will be saved mindset says, "Not much use in trying since only a few will be saved anyway." The few will be saved mindset gives no hope to the believer, no reason to remain faithful.

Hope comes from believing that many will be saved. Is it easier to believe you can be part of "many" or "few?" Put your hope in Jesus Christ and you will be among the many.

Open Our Eyes And See The Lost –

We live in a time and place where it seems that men's hearts are not willing to listen and heed the words of His Revelation.

But Jesus cries out to us,

John 4:35 *Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.*

Acts 18:9-10 *And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people."*

A many will be saved mindset opens our eyes to see the lost as people who will listen, as people who will obey, as people who will be saved.

Just take the two previous passages in context to see the implications of this mindset. The first is a Samaritan village the second is the sinful city of Corinth. But both had many believers.

But on the other hand the few will be saved mindset says, "Don't waste your time, they won't listen." The few will be saved mindset closes our eyes to the lost because it makes us think they won't believe anyway.

That was the mindset of the disciples in **John 4:35** and maybe Paul felt much like that as he entered Corinth **Act 18:9-10**.

He came to Corinth after several brutal defeats. Maybe Paul looked at Corinth and wondered how much trouble he would have because so few listened and so many were opposed. Jesus wanted Paul to concentrate on the "many in this city" that belonged to Him.

The few will be saved mindset saves no one.

Many will be saved!

This attitude will push us to tell our friends and family what the Lord has done for us

Mark 5:19 *And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."*

Then they can be saved with the many.

You can be a part of the many who will glorify God through eternity by obeying His commands, putting your trust in Jesus Christ, and living faithfully for Him.

Clay Gentry